

## Message Text

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51

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 SCCT-01 SY-05 L-02

/054 W

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R 071645Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4535

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MASERU

AMEMBASSY MBABANE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE CAPE TOWN 0395

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, RH, SF

SUBJECT: SITHOLE'S RELEASE: SMITH PUSHED INTO  
UNCOMFORTABLE CORNER

REF: CAPE TOWN 391 (NOTAL)

1. AS TEXT OF HIS SPEECH (REFTEL) INDICATES, IAN SMITH  
AGREED ONLY WITH GREATEST RELUCTANCE TO RELEASE ZANU'S REV.  
NDABANINGI SITHOLE FROM DETENTION AND PERMIT HIM TO  
JOURNEY TO DAR ES SALAAM. ALTHOUGH SOUTH AFRICAN FONSEC FOURIE  
DID NOT INDICATE TO AMBASSADOR HURD LAST WEEK THAT HE AND  
FONMIN MULLER, ACTING ON PRIME MINISTER VORSTER'S INSTRUCTIONS,  
PUT ANY PRESSURE ON SMITH, THIS CLEARLY WAS THE CASE. WE  
AGREE WITH ASSESSMENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN POLITICAL COMMENTATOR  
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STANLEY UYS WHO, WRITING IN APRIL 5 SUNDAY TIMES, SAID,

"POWERFUL PRESSURE BY...VORSTER ON RHODESIA'S MR. IAN SMITH LED TO THE SENSATIONAL RELEASE YESTERDAY OF THE DETAINED ZANU LEADER, THE REV. NDABANINGI SITHOLE." UYS ALSO WROTE THAT VORSTER HAD ACTED ON "URGENT" REQUEST BY PRESIDENT KAUNDA, "WHO BELIEVED IT WAS CRUCIAL THAT MR. SITHOLE SHOULD ATTEND THE OAU TALKS ON DETENTE IN DAR ES SALAAM THIS WEEK."

2. PRESS HERE HAS REPORTED VOCAL AND EMOTIONAL REACTION BY RHODESIAN RIGHT-WINGERS AGAINST SMITH'S DECISION, WHICH THEY EVIDENTLY REGARD AS SELLOUT TO "TERRORISTS." LEN IDENSHOHN, RHODESIA NATIONAL PARTY LEADER SAID, "IT IS AN INSULT TO ANY RHODESIAN WITH INTELLIGENCE--IF THERE ARE ANY LEFT." IT HAS ALSO BEEN REPORTED THAT RODESIANS BELIEVE SOUTH AFRICA IS LETTING THEM DOWN. A RHODESIA FRONT MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, D.F. PHILLIPS, WENT SO FAR AS TO ACCUSE PUBLICLY THE SAG OF INTERFERING IN RHODESIAN INTERNAL AFFAIRS. IN NEWSPAPER INTERVIEW HE STATED: "NO LONGER CAN SOUTH AFRICA CLAIM THAT IT DOES NOT INTERFERE IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER NATIONS; BUT IF THIS CONCESSION WHICH RHODESIA HAS MADE WILL ENHANCE THE ACCEPTABILITY OF DETENTE BY THE OAU, IT WILL BE DUE TO THE SACRIFICES WHICH RHODESIANS HAVE MADE, AT CONSIDERABLE RISK TO THEIR OWN SECURITY.

3. COMMENT: BY PUSHING SMITH TO FREE SITHOLE, VORSTER HAS AGAIN DEMONSTRATED IMPORTANCE HE PLACES ON DETENTE AND HIS REALIZATION THAT SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA IS VITAL TO PROGRESS TOWARD IMPROVED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SOUTH AFRICA AND AT LEAST SOME AFRICAN STATES. SITHOLE'S RELEASE DOES NOT, OF COURSE, MEAN AN END TO OBSTACLES TO RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT. IT DOES SEEM CLEAR INDICATION THAT SOUTH AFRICANS ARE COMMITTED TO WORK FOR PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA, AND THAT IF RHODESIANS AT SOME POINT REFUSE TO GO THIS ROUTE THEY WILL HAVE TO FACE PROSPECT OF RENEWED AND ESCALATED WARFARE WITHOUT ANY ASSISTANCE FROM SOUTH AFRICA. END COMMENT.

4. WE ARE UNABLE TO ASSESS ACCURACY OF PRESS REPORTS THAT THERE IS "A SERIOUS DIVISION WITHIN THE SMITH CABINET,"  
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AND THAT DISSENSION IN RHODESIA FRONT COULD LEAD TO CONFRONTATION BETWEEN SMITH AND HIS PARTY'S RIGHT-WING. THIS, ACCORDING TO ARGUS NEWSPAPERS' AFRICA NEWS SERVICE, COULD PRECIPITATE A GENERAL ELECTION.  
EDMONDSON

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## Message Attributes

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